

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-12 GAC-01 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 /125 W
----- 124727

R 071330 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4637

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, EI

SUBJ: COALITION PARTIES EASILY WIN CONTROL OF SENATE

BEGIN SUMMARY: FORTY- NINE ELECTED MEMBERS OF NEW
SENATE HAVE NOW BEEN CHOSEN, BALANCE OF POWER GOING
DECISIVELY TO FINE GAEL/ LABOR COALITON. PM COSGRAVE
WILL NOMINATE REMAINING 11 SENATORS. SENATE LACKS
BOTH POWER AND PRESTIGE, THOUGH THERE IS SOME INTEREST
IN ELECTION OF SIX SENATORS FROM UNIVERSITY
CONSTITUENCIES. END SUMMARY.

1. COUNTING OF SENATE VOTES BEGAN MAY 1 AND ENDED
MAY 3, WITH 49 SENATORS ELECTED. PM COSGRAVE IS
ENTITLED TO APPOINT REMAINING 11, FOR TOTAL OF
60. HE WILL HAVE EASY TASK, AS FINE GAEL AND LABOR
SUPPORTERS EASILY OUTNUMBER FIANNA FAIL MEN AMONG
ELECTED SENATORS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE GIVE EXACT
FIGURES ON POLITICAL LEANINGS, AS SOME SENATORS ARE
ALMOST ENTIRELY OUTSIDE PARTY POLITICS. ABOUT 29 OF
NEW MEN, HOWEVER, SEEM CLOSER TO FINE GAEL OR LABOR
THAN TO FIANNA FAIL. SEVERAL WELL- KNOWN FIANNA FAIL
FIGURES WERE DEFEATED, INCLUDING ACTING CHAIRMAN OF
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PREVIOUS SENATE AND NEVILLE KEERY, WHO HAD BEEN POPULAR AMONG JOURNALISTS AS FIANNA FAIL' S ONLY RESIDENT INTELLECTUAL. ON OTHER HAND, EX- FONMIN BRIAN LENIHAN WON A SENATE SEAT, ALLOWING HIM REMAIN ACTIVE IN DUBLIN POLITICS.

2. SINCE HE HAD EASY CONTROL OF SENATE, COSGRAVE IS BEING URGED BY PRESS TO GIVE SOME OF HIS 11 APPOINTMENTS TO DISTINGUISHED IRISHMEN OUTSIDE POLITICAL ARENA. THIS COULD BE GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR FINE GAEL, AND WOULD ATTRACT SOME PUBLIC INTEREST TO SENATE. FIANNA FAIL DID NOT USUALLY HAVE THIS OPTION: SENATORS ARE ELECTED FROM ELITE GROUPS, AND MOST OLD ELITES LEAN AWAY FROM FIANNA FAIL. PM LYNCH THUS HAD TO USE HIS 11 APPOINTMENTS TO ENSURE GOVT CONTROL OF SENATE. NO GOVT IN RECENT YEARS APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO ALLOWING SENATE ANY INDEPENDENT ROLE. MAIN THING PARTY LEADERS WANT FROM SENATE IS RATIFICATION OF DAIL ACTS WITHOUT MUCH DELAY.

3. SOURCE CLOSE TO FINE GAEL, HOWEVER, DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT COSGRAVE WILL DEPART FROM TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF AWARDED " HIS" SENATE SEATS TO PARTY FAITHFUL.

4. OF 49 ELECTED SENATORS, 43 ARE CHOSEN FROM FIVE " VOCATIONAL" PANELS (AGRICULTURE, LABOR, INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCE, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL). VOTERS FOR THESE PANELS ARE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND LOCAL GOVTS. MOST OF PUBLIC IS HARDLY AWARE THAT ELECTION IS GOING ON. RESULT OF PUBLIC APATHY HAS BEEN TO MAKE SENATE AS LOW IN PRESTIGE AS IT IS IN REAL POWER. THERE ARE FREQUENT PROPOSALS TO ABOLISH SENATE ENTIRELY AS AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY.

5. REMAINING SIX SEATS, HOWEVER, COME FROM UNIVERSITIES, AND THERE IS SOME PUBLIC INTEREST IN THESE. THREE ARE CHOSEN FROM TRINITY COLLEGE AND THREE FROM OTHER IRISH UNIVERSITIES (" NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND"). ANY UNIVERSITY GRADUATE MAY VOTE. MANY UNIVERSITY SENATORS HAVE BEEN WELL QUALIFIED AND HAVE USED POST AS SPRINGBOARD TO MORE MEANINGFUL POLITICAL ROLE.
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(BEST EXAMPLE IS CURRENT FONMIN, GARRET FITZGERALD.)

6. THREE SENATORS FROM TRINITY, IN ORDER OF VOTE STRENGTH, ARE:

A) MARY ROBINSON (RE- ELECTED). HAS BEEN EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN CAMPAIGNS FOR REFORMS, ESPECIALLY OF LAWS

FORBIDDING CONTRACEPTION.

B) NOEL BROWNE, MAVERICK EX- LABOR DEPUTY. REFUSED
TO RUN FOR HIS DAIL SEAT BECAUSE HE DISAPPROVED OF
FINE GAEL/ LABOR COALITION.

C) TREVOR WEST (RE- ELECTED). HE ALSO EARNED
NAME AS REFORMER.

7. THREE SENATORS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES ARE:

A) AUGUSTINE MARTIN (NEW). ACHIEVED IMPRESIVE
VOTE STRENGTH ON HIS FIRST TRY FOR OFFICE.

B) P. M. QUINLAN (RE- ELECTED). A PROFESSOR FROM
CORK WHO HAS NOT BEEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE.

C) JOHN HORGAN (RE- ELECTED). HAS BEEN PROMINENT
IN CAMPAIGN FOR RELIGIOUS REFORMS, AND HAS SUPPORTED
CAMPAIGN TO REFORM CONTRACEPTION LAWS.
SORENSEN

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